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For Dwight's Journal of Music.

## Half a dozen of Beethoven's Contemporaries.

II. ANTONIO SALIERI.

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There is no account of any composition by Salieri in the year 1777; and after the success of Umlauf's operetta the Emperor, being full of the matter, gave his Kapellmeister leave to visit Italy, where his growing fame had now brought him three invitations to come and compose so many operas. In Milan a new opera house was to be opened—no less a one than the now famous Scala—and all the old and well known composers of the Italian cities were passed over, to call their young countryman—now about 27 years of age—from Vienna to write the opening piece. This was "*Europa riconosciuta*," text by Verazi, in two acts, with choruses and an analogous ballet in the middle of each act. The piece had great success spite of a miserable text, and long kept its place on the stage, though Mosel thinks it one of Salieri's poorer compositions.

From Milan the composer went to Venice to compose "*La scuola de' Gelosi*," an opera buffa, text by Mazzola, which was brought out early in 1779 and had extraordinary success. Salieri had with him on this tour a young German, now for the first time in Italy, who lodged with him in Venice, and accompanied him everywhere. The day succeeding the opening of the theatres after Christmas is, or rather was (while Venice was), a day for the assembling of all, who cared for music and the drama, in the coffeehouses, about St. Mark's place, to discuss or inquire about the new pieces, with which the various houses had opened. It is the custom in that city to name the theatres from the nearest church, but in talking about them to call them by the name of the saint only,—instead, for instance, of saying "the theatre near the church of St. Samuel," or "Teatro Sant' Angiolo," to say merely "San Samuele," or "Sant' Angiolo." On this morning Salieri with his companion took his coffee in one of the largest houses on the square, where the theatrical news was of course the main topic of conversation.

"Saint Benedict was hissed off," said one. "The Angel was pretty successful, but Saint Samuel went to the devil," said another, and so on. On leaving the house, the young German, astounded and indignant, remarked to Salieri: "How disrespectfully they do talk here of the saints!"

From Venice the composer journeyed to Rome to compose the opera buffa, "*La partenza inaspettata*," text by Petrosellini, which, with its beautiful, flowing melodies, corresponding exquisitely to the text, and its fine but simple accompaniment, in some of the vocal pieces consisting only of the quartet of bowed instruments, was another complete triumph.

These successes led to offers of new engagements, which with Joseph's permission he accepted, and therefore in the spring of 1779, he returned to Milan to compose "*Il Talismano*," text

by Goldoni, for the opening of another new theatre—Alla Cannobiana. This was also an opera buffa with choruses, in two acts.

Passing through Florence on his way north, he found the manager of the principal house just ready to bring out his "*Fiera di Venezia*," and that functionary besought him, at least, be present at the general rehearsal, to which he consented. The rehearsal was set for the evening, and at the hour soloists and orchestra were ready, but not a chorus singer. "Why are they so late?" asked Salieri. "Because the shops are not shut," was the answer. The explanation of which was, that most of the Italian choruses then were made up of shopkeepers or their assistants, who, knowing not one note from another, learned their parts by rote, and never made a mistake,—but they had only Italian choruses to sing.

The directors of the new Cannobiana theatre, three noblemen of Milan, had arranged to open the house with three works: Salieri's "*Fiera di Venezia*," "*Il Talismano*," and finally, an opera to be set by a composer named Russ. While the vocalists were studying the first, Salieri set himself to work upon the second, of which Goldoni had sent the first act and the plan of the whole. The second act was delayed by the sickness of Goldoni. Then the theatre was not ready in time, and, as the singers were only engaged up to a certain date, it became impossible to produce the third of the proposed operas, and poor Russ saw himself deprived of the opportunity of proving his talents, and must perforce content himself with the present made by the directors and the written invitation or engagement for the next season. Salieri pitied the man in his bitter disappointment, and, satisfied with having one of his operas performed, he proposed to the directors, that they give the second act of "*Il Talismano*," which had now arrived, to Russ. They did this; Russ composed it, and the work was a complete success.

A change in the management of the theatre in Venice, the old manager having died, and the want of sufficient security that his time and labor would be adequately rewarded, led Salieri to give up the composition of "*L'isola capricciosa*," which the poet Mazzola had already sent him, and of which he had already several numbers finished. He therefore remained some time longer in Milan, and then returned to Rome to compose another opera text by Petrosellini, "*La dama pastorella*," for the Carneval of 1780, a work which he himself says "neither pleased nor displeased."

In Rome he received an invitation to Naples, where Joseph's disreputable sister Caroline was queen, to compose a serious opera for San Carlo, to be brought out in May, 1780, and to prepare his "*Scuola de' gelosi*" for production upon the so-called Florentine Theatre. A third leave of absence was therefore necessary. The composer was long in doubt whether he could with propriety apply again for an extension of his leave; but as it was for only three months, and as he had re-

ceived the invitation through the Austrian Ambassador, Count v. Lamberg, and with the approbation of the King of Naples—Joseph's brother-in-law—he took courage and sent on his application to Count Rosenberg, chief chamberlain, and head of the court theatre at Vienna—him, who had the previous year obtained the prolongation of his leave of absence—and went on to Naples to begin his work and await the reply. His petition was written in the most respectful terms, and his reasons displayed in the clearest light, and there is no doubt that, had Joseph read it, the three months would have been granted him at once. But Rosenberg, as he afterwards confessed, placed the petition in his cabinet and forgot it, and made Salieri's desire known to Joseph in few words and with no explanation of the circumstances under which the petition was written and which certainly justified it. The result was that the composer received the following answer:

"In reply to the petition addressed to his Majesty for leave to remain still longer in Italy, All-highest-the-same makes it my duty to write you, that you are your own master to remain so long there as you please or think for your good; yes, that you, if you find yourself better off there than here, may remain there forever. I am pained to be unable to make you any pleasanter reply and remain, &c., &c."

It was a very unlucky mistake of Salieri's not to have sent word to Rosenberg with his petition, that, in the hope of receiving the desired leave, he was going on to Naples in order to save all the time possible. The ungracious reply was sent to Rome and thence forwarded by a friend to him in Naples. Meantime Salieri had waited upon Count Lamberg and had been presented at court, where the king and queen had received him with great favor. He had also begun the composition of his opera, "*La Semiramide*."

The surprise and fright with which Rosenberg's letter filled him were overwhelming. He hastened to Lamberg to ask his advice, who sought to calm him, by persuading him that if the queen should apply to her brother in his behalf the matter would have no serious consequences. Salieri therefore determined to apply at once to the queen, but as he returned to his lodgings, and thought it over, it presented itself in a very different light. He remembered that Joseph, friendly as he was, invariably, towards every man and especially to those constantly about him, did not like to be forced to say yes, where he had once said, no. Filled with anxiety lest the mere refusal of his petition might not be all, but that a loss of his master's favor might follow, he returned to Count Lamberg and, most urgently entreating him to find a way of cancelling his engagement with the Neapolitan court, departed on the instant for Vienna. Before entering his carriage he wrote to Count Rosenberg, entreating forgiveness for his too great freedom, and announcing his immediate departure from Naples.

At noon, April 8, 1780, he joined his delighted

family—that is on the second anniversary of the day on which he began his Italian journey. His first call was upon Rosenberg; but not finding him at home, he went to the palace and, as a mark of his submission to the will of the Emperor, instead of proceeding into Joseph's apartment, as his right was and as he had always done, remained without in the corridor, where petitioners awaited their monarch, who came thither every afternoon at three o'clock to hear them and receive their papers. There, a little apart from some twenty persons, mostly country people, who awaited the Emperor, Salieri took his place, not a little afraid of a cool reception.

At the hour Joseph returned from a ride, came as usual through the corridor, listened to the petitioners, talked with them more like a father than a monarch, and suddenly caught sight of the Kapellmeister. Hastening to him he exclaimed:

"See, here is Salieri! I did not expect you so soon; have you had a pleasant journey?"

"An excellent one, your majesty," he answered timidly, "notwithstanding, in order to repair my fault, for which I humbly pray forgiveness, I felt bound to travel day and night, that I might so much the sooner resume my duties here at court."

"It was not necessary to hurry so," said Joseph, kindly, "still it is a pleasure to me to see you again. Now go up stairs, we will try some pieces out of your new operas, which have been sent to me from Italy."

These good words so calmed and encouraged the musician that he forgot all the troubles which his hurried journey had caused him. On entering the ante-chamber he found some of the older members of the Court Chapel, who rejoiced all the more to see him, as a report had obtained currency, that he had fallen under the Emperor's displeasure. Half an hour later came Joseph, put the petitions and documents, which he had received, into his cabinet, seated himself in the music-room to his dinner, and had Salieri called in to talk with him during his solitary meal of fifteen minutes duration. "Had he found his family all well?" he asked, and put various questions in relation to his tour, to his compositions while away, and the like. Salieri told his story, and of course came at last to the Neapolitan business. As in some confusion, he confessed, that he had left home for Naples without waiting for permission to do so, in full faith that this permission would follow him, Joseph, with a sudden turn of his head—one of his peculiarities—fixed his eyes upon him with an expression of surprise. Salieri ceased and there was a moment's pause; during which he (Salieri) thought his master, who had not known that the matter had gone so far, was sorry not to have granted his petition; still he said nothing, and gave the conversation a new turn by the question: "Where did you find the best orchestra?" Salieri saw that nothing more was to be said on the Naples affair and bore himself accordingly.

After his meal the other musicians were called in, and Joseph devoted his usual concert hour to pieces from "*Europa riconosciuta*," and "*La Scuola de' Gelosi*." The concert over, Salieri was told to visit in the evening the new "National (Sing-spiel) Sing-drama," for so Joseph called his German opera. "You must then tell me," added the Emperor, "if the company and the establishment have made progress during your absence." At

the next private concert, Joseph asked as soon as he saw Salieri. "How, do you find our national Sing-drama?" The composer, really pleased with what he had seen and heard, replied, that he had found it in all respects wonderfully perfect. "Now you shall compose a German opera," said Joseph. Salieri proposed the translation of one of his fine operas, composed in Italy. "No translation," returned the other, smiling, "an original sing-drama." "Your majesty, I do not know how to set about the work of an opera in the German language, I speak it so badly." "Very well," said Joseph, still smiling, "the labor will answer for an exercise in the language. I will to-morrow morning give Rosenberg the order to have a German operatic poem prepared for you."

This, which was proposed in joke, Salieri had to carry out in full earnest—for which, however, he had plenty of leisure, as Maria Theresa happened to die soon after (Nov. 29, 1780), and the court theatres were of course for some weeks shut up.

(To be Continued.)

### Giacomo Meyerbeer.

Giacomo Meyerbeer, or Jacques Meyer-Liebsman Beer, was born at Berlin, on the 5th of September, 1794—according to most of his biographers. The eighth edition of the *Dictionnaire de la Conversation* of Leipsic, however, places the date of his birth three years earlier, in 1791—the year before Rossini was born—and this fact has crept into many historical dictionaries. The father, Jacques Beer, was a wealthy Jewish banker, and the name has made itself famous in the arts and sciences. Giacomo had two brothers, both of whom became celebrated. Guillaume, accounted among the best astronomers of Germany, obtained the astronomical prize from the Academy of Sciences, of Berlin, for a map of the moon, and died in 1850. Michel, who died in 1833, at the early age of 34, was one of the most promising dramatic poets in Germany, which is attested by his tragedies of the *Paria* and *Struensee*, for the latter of which, some years later, Giacomo composed an overture and incidental music.

All the biographers of Meyerbeer point to the premature indications of his genius. Some assert that even as early as his fourth year he exhibited undoubted manifestations of musical intelligence. This we can readily believe; but that he should at that period transfer the tunes he heard played in the streets on barrel-organs with the right hand to the pianoforte, and make out correct harmonies with his left, is asking us to believe too much. The parents, enraptured with the boy, entrusted his musical education to Lauska, a pianist, pupil of Clementi, a good player and teacher. Meyerbeer made astonishing progress under his new master, and at six years of age had become a little lion-pianist in the salons of Berlin. The father and mother never contemplated educating their young prodigy for a public career; but they thought such extraordinary talents should not be wasted, and provided the best instruction in their power. When only nine years old Giacomo was considered one of the first pianists in Berlin. On the occasion of two benefit concerts, at the theatre—on the 17th of November, 1803, and the 2nd of January, 1804—he was heard for the first time, by the public, and achieved an immense success. The Abbé Vogler, who at that time enjoyed celebrity in Germany, as organist and rhetorician, heard him at these concerts, and pronounced that he would one day be a great musician. Some time afterwards Clementi, hearing the youthful pianist, was so much charmed, that, in spite of an increasing dislike to teaching, he gave Giacomo lessons during the whole time of his stay in the Prussian capital.

While yet in his tenth year, and before he had received instructions in harmony, Meyerbeer had composed many pieces for pianoforte and voice,

without any other guide than his own particular instinct. A master was, nevertheless, provided for him in Bernard Anselm Weber, pupil of the Abbé Vogler, and *chef d'orchestre* of the Opera at Berlin, with whom he studied for some years. In 1809, the Abbé Vogler sent for Meyerbeer to Darmstadt, at the cathedral of which place the Abbé was organist. Meyerbeer there found among his fellow students Carl Maria von Weber, Carl's brother, and Gaensbacher, subsequently chapel-master at the Church of St. Stephen, in Vienna. Devoting himself heart and soul to the study of harmony, and particularly directing his attention to Church music, in a very short time he wrote his first sacred work—an oratorio, called *God and Nature*, which had a great success, and which induced the Grand Duke, after having heard it, to appoint him composer to the Court. The year following Meyerbeer produced his first opera—entitled *Jephthah's Vow*—at Munich. The story was ill-suited for dramatic purposes, and the music betrayed too great a leaning to the severe style of composition, and too little inclination towards attractive melody. Meyerbeer obtained extraordinary success, however, as a pianist at this time, and betook himself to Vienna, the city of Pianists, as it was called, with the intention of performing in public. It was, nevertheless, many months before he ventured to confront a Viennese audience, being somewhat scared at the great success of Hummel, then in the very zenith of his talent. When Meyerbeer did play he had a triumphant reception, which induced the director of the Court Theatre to entrust him with the composition of an Opera, entitled, *Abimelech*; or, *The two Caliphs*. This work had little success, Italian music alone being in favor with Prince Metternich and the nobles attached to the Court. Salieri, who was at that period in Vienna, advised Meyerbeer to go to Italy and study the Italian models. The young German musician, though he had no belief in Italian composers and little faith in Italian art, was quite open to conviction, and the counsels of the composer of *The Danaids* and *Tarare* had their weight. Meyerbeer arrived in Italy at the moment when the *Tancredi* furor was raging at its highest. Becoming a convert to the fascination of the Rossini style he wrote his first Italian Opera, called *Romilda e Constanza*, which was produced at Padua, in 1818—Pisaroni sustaining the principal character. The following year he composed *Semiramide Riconosciuta*, which was played at Turin; and the year after *Emma di Resburgo*, represented at Vienna with enthusiastic applause. Returning to Berlin in 1821, Meyerbeer composed for the theatre there an Opera after the Italian style, called *The Gate of Brandenburg*, which, though accepted, was not brought out. He then returned to Italy, having been engaged to compose *Margaret of Anjou* for the Scala, at Milan, which was brought out at Milan in 1822. To *Margaret of Anjou* succeeded, in 1823, *L'Esule di Granata*—Pisaroni and Lablache sustaining the chief parts. *Atanarzo* was written for Rome, but not produced on account of the illness of the *prima donna*. In 1825, *Il Crociato in Egitto* was performed at Venice with a success which made the worshippers of Rossini tremble for the supremacy of their idol. This *Crociato* was welcomed all over Europe with acclamations, and sealed the reputation of Meyerbeer as a composer of real genius. Its first representation in London was memorable for the introduction of Malibran on the operatic stage.

From 1825 to 1831 Meyerbeer's operatic muse was silent. He married in 1827, and two children, the only issue, died soon after birth. He was not idle, however, during this period, but composed many sacred pieces. *Robert le Diable*, written expressly for the Grand Opera, of Paris, was, after repeated delays, brought out on the 21st of November, 1831. The singers were Mlle. Falcon, Madame Dorus-Gras, MM. Nourrit and Levasseur. It was said that *Robert le Diable* marked a new epoch in the lyric art. Certainly Meyerbeer flashed upon the world with unexpected effulgence. Few recognized the captivating, half Italian style of the *Crociato*, in the weird-like, original, and powerfully dramatic



music of *Robert*, with its brightly-colored orchestration and marvellous fitness to its supernatural theme. A new composer was acknowledged, and Meyerbeer was criticized as though he had not previously existed. Between the production of *Robert*, and that of the *Huguenots* nearly five years elapsed. The *Huguenots* was considered an advance on *Robert* in dramatic interest, if not in beauty and variety of melody, and, the story being more interesting, it became most popular, as it is indeed the veritable master-work of its composer. The interval between the *Huguenots* and the *Prophète*—the third production of Meyerbeer at the Grand Opera—was nearly three times that between the *Huguenots* and *Robert*. The *Prophète* was brought out in 1849; but the *Camp of Silesia*, the *Marche aux Flambeaux*, and some minor works had been composed meanwhile. In 1857 the *Etoile du Nord* was produced at the Opéra-Comique, and, in 1859, the *Pardon de Ploërmel* at the same theatre. Of the *Africaine*, which Meyerbeer treasured up with so much care and held back from the public with such strange tenacity, we only know that it has been long finished, and that the composer was only delaying its production till he could meet with a fit representative for the part of the heroine. We may, however, hope that this long looked-for offspring of the great musician's genius will be speedily brought to light. It is a legacy bequeathed by Meyerbeer to the world, which the world is prepared to accept with gratitude and delight.

### American Opera—Mr. Fry's "Notre Dame."

(From the Philadelphia Press.)

The third performance of the new opera of "Notre Dame" has been a success quite as general as its first and second, and upon this fortunate fact we congratulate the composer and the public for which he has labored. The cordial hearing Mr. Fry's work has received is a promise, we trust, of much more extended favor. We again express our admiration of the splendid and spirited first scene of the opera, which, in point of stage effect, has never, doubtless, been excelled in America. Produced under direction of an American composer, with American artists and an American chorus, and an orchestra of the largest and best character, it deserves all praise. The grand chorus which is one of the chief attractions of the opera has been heard with great applause, and the improved energy and confidence of the principal artists is gratifying, as this part of the production has been the least satisfactory.

To our former notice of the opera we must add the more emphatic expression of greater praise of the staid, care, and wide industry and vigor (especially remarkable in a composer of our own) which Mr. Fry has shown in his chorus and orchestra, and in the mass and body of his work. That it is so generally sustained, and at the same time so broad an effort, is the most important and encouraging fact which we glean from a judgment of its merits. Mr. Fry has been attentive to particulars which better known composers have perhaps neglected. Of course, it is very fulsome praise to rank "Notre Dame" with the works of Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi—works of which it is not free of imitation, and with which it doubtfully compares in elaboration. An inspiration of one melody, equal to the least of Bellini's, upon whom Mr. Fry has modelled his sentimental music, would have given him a popular fame long ago. We could name many passages in "Notre Dame" which do credit to the study and fine taste of its able composer; a few, also, which breathe real strength, or very nearly so, in an atmosphere of imperfection; but we shall not do him the injustice of ranking him with his masters.

We again take occasion to praise the admirable light music which gives so much spirit and charm to the ballet scene, and can only regret that this scene is unnecessary to the work as a whole. *Quasimodo's* soliloquy in the belfry is among the best-modelled and strongest passages, but is spoiled in the rendering of Mr. Seguin, and weakened by the concluding Bell song, which is comparatively trivial, though excellent in subject. The fine song of the Royal Scotch Guard, which belongs to the hale and simple, but not commonplace English school, is well worked up, admirably sung, and will continue, we think, to receive the greatest share of the popular applause. "I know that I love him" is an ingenious and pretty piece of musical broiery; "Vision of Love" is excellent, if we ignore that it is an imita-

tion of *Spirto Gentil*—and other clever and equally attractive things might be instanced with similar qualifications, but all would show, we think, meritorious imperfection, rather than, in the least instance, anything discreditable to the high reputation which Mr. Fry enjoys. We should, perhaps, except one instance, which occurs in the belfry, and in these lines,

—"So up and down they go,  
The low now high, the high now low."

The last line is measured off into music, (should we call it music?) the "low" very low, the "high" very high, and, as a piece of construction, is worthy of a carpenter. Mr. Fry may have celebrated precedents to fall back upon, but such work is only journeywork, nevertheless. Here the question is suggested, whether, if Mr. Fry had grown in a community more critical, he would have made such fripperies of musical diction. It vexes us to think that, with so much industry and ability, he has shown so little tendency to absolute creation. From the nature of the case, it is very difficult or impossible for a foreign composer to surrender his musical allegiance to the young Italy of Bellini and Donizetti, and preserve the color of originality. This garden of art, if as charming as Italy itself is limited and ephemeral. Wiser composers than Mr. Fry are content to abide in their own fields, nature having gifted the mind of all lands and the experience of every nation with something that is their own. Such a gift is not to be despised, and is wisely bestowed—if it is only a rock in Scotland, a lawn in Ireland, a grove in England, a forest in Germany, and a wilderness in America. Besides, we must regard the different life and enterprise and sentiment of different civilizations, all of which should affect a composer and a man of art. Genius is representative. Why yearn after the Italian mock Eden? Why attempt to rival Bellini's sweetness or Verdi's sonority? It would be ridiculous for an American to think of writing melo-dramas of intrigue against Alexander Dumas, and it would be just as absurd for him to attempt to follow Verdi. Our composer must think for himself, and not be carried away like a waif in the deluge of another's sensation. If it is right to compare our music with our literature, how would Mr. Fry stand by the side of Mr. Bryant? Our poet is a literary patriot, and as he breathes the great moral of the Wilderness in *Thanatopsis*, is a more loyal American than even Fennimore Cooper. But Mr. Fry is neither patriot nor cosmopolitan. Imitation is not the characteristic of the two most prominent English composers, and yet Wallace has given us some melodies, if not as broad, yet almost as profoundly sweet as Bellini, and Balfe has written choruses and ballads perhaps not unworthy of Auber. Both Wallace and Balfe are more or less cosmopolitan, for both are Irishmen and Irishmen are wanderers; but they have done much, unquestionably, to make an English opera out of Irish genius, and if they have gone to the continent for their stories, their music is chiefly from themselves. Our American composer has not received his naturalization.

Let us, however, be as patient as Mr. Fry has been. In his time and circumstances it has been an especially difficult matter to write an opera—much more difficult to produce one. Comparatively speaking, the composer has been without critics and without friends. We give him that sincere acknowledgment which we should give to an indomitable man, and heartily trust that his health will be spared for deeper and higher efforts. More than this, we hope that his excellent example will, in good time, lead many others to surpass him. Even if "Notre Dame" does not prove a permanent work, Mr. Fry has achieved a considerable success, which, everything considered, is honorable to himself and the musical cause in America. We trust that he has truly become the father of American opera, and higher recognition than this he need not wish. His brave efforts for his own music and ours deserve the praise and thanks of the public; and, not least in his favor, "Notre Dame" merits criticism. Of course he has not equalled Bellini or Donizetti—it would be enough could he compare with Wallace. But he has done well, and the public may justly admire what he has done, as something much superior in artistic respects to operas which have gained foreign attention.

In this connection, we recall that upon its first performance we gave the necessarily hasty opinion that "Notre Dame" was at least equal in spirit and purpose to the lyricized version of Bulwer's "Last Days of Pompeii," recently brought out by the Italians, here and in New York, with some "sensation." So much has the former improved upon our judgment that we are fortunately able to regard it as even preferable to the Italian work, which audiences, here and in New York, applauded greatly, and which the criticism of our neighbor city flattered, as it general-

ly flatters every thing sensational. "Ione" is an instance of Verdi fanatism, without the soul of Verdi—melodramatic music with plenty of energy, but utterly wanting genius or originality—flaccid trash, flash success, but only fit for rabid catgut and extreme lungs. But if "Ione" prove a triumph in Naples, not to mention New York, we have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Fry's opera deserves far more, in comparison, of the public of America. If the American composer is not mad with genius, he is not insane for want of it. Measured by the highest standards, there is much in "Notre Dame" that might be condemned in the same spirit with which we censure "Ione;" but we accept it as rather an excellent home article, and not a pretentious and worthless import. It is to be regretted, however, that in our domestic production of opera we must sometimes take Verdi and Donizetti, smuggled in at second-hand; and it is a compliment to Mr. Fry's sincere efforts to say that he is not well adapted to the business, and that Signor Petrella makes more characteristic Italian music.

The libretto in the drama of "Notre Dame" has been thought worthy of special remarks, and we shall, therefore, pay it attention. As it is written by a brother of the composer (Mr. J. Reese Fry, of this city,) we may suppose that there has been a fair understanding between the musician and his dramatist, who has furnished him doubtless with the opportunities he desired. The composer might have had a higher ambition and desired more; for if there is a marked falling off and want of balance in the last act of the opera, it is especially the fault of the dramatist, whose want of equal tact gives the composer his only excuse for inserting the meritorious but irrelevant ballet scene.

The libretto is tolerably versified, and will compare favorably with the average of libretto-writing, which, as custom goes, is a business, rather than an art, as it should be. The bell-song, in the second-act—we do the librettist justice to say—is better worded than composed, for, although in most respects only a commonplace piece of writing, it contains one or two felicitous suggestions of poetry, the only instances, we think, in the whole libretto, which the composer has altogether neglected. Poetry seems to Mr. Fry's muse untranslatable—and poetry we must regard as the test of the genius and thought of the composer—as, on the other hand, (we think it worth while to say) the musical element and feeling is only a less general test, perhaps, of poetry. The two arts, poetry and music, are by nature wedded as man to wife, though they have too often had merely a fashionable understanding—a conventional mutuality. Edgar Poe (and who understood the subject more finely?) suggested everything when he said that music was needed to complete the perfect poem, and the subtle musical quality of his own poems is proof of his theory. That so many fine songs are sung to barren words only shows that the composer is often a poet when his versifier is only prosaic. Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, have given equal music to the songs of Goethe and Schiller, Körner, Heine, Müller, Salis, Tieck, and many more, besides even hard Klopstock, (sparing a thought of what they have lavished, out of the wonderful magnanimity of the German genius, on the literature of other lands), till German poetry is almost one great song, and German music one grand poem. Not to know the music of Germany is almost not to know its poetry. Again we say, with what application we can make of it to opera, that the test of the music is poetry; but opera, as it is popularly understood, is not the best work to employ the developing art of our country. The man who translates a noble song into noble music will do his art and his nation a service which imperfect operators, with all the drowning sensations of the stage, will not readily equal. Mr. Fry would gratefully acknowledge that one song of Schubert's, written in a quarter of an hour at a country tavern, is worth the whole of his laborious opera. Here we, perhaps unfairly, oppose genius to talent; but Mr. Fry has shown great talent. In giving him praise, we chiefly pay tribute to the musical science displayed in a singular instance upon the largest popular scale. Yet, we ask the considerate question—Can we have any decidedly American opera before we possess something like American song, making allowance for the English influence in music which, small as it is, is even greater than our own? Will our music rise to the level of poetry, and shall we have creation instead of scholarship? Something will be wanted to give our music feet and our poetry wings—to make song a home-dweller in our own groves and by our own households. Fortunately, the Germans have come among us, to show us how to celebrate Shakespeare, to explain Beethoven, and, if they cannot instruct us in social freedom, to teach us at least the glorious liberty of art. We may overrate the element which we admire, but no

one will question that America owes it much indeed. Though this may seem a vulgar fact to the thin and debonnaire dilettantism which is so easy a patron of Italian opera, it is, nevertheless, a wholesome and every-day truth.

We return to the new version of "Notre Dame," which the libretto has so narrowly escaped making an oratorio instead of an opera. In a dramatic respect, what he has done is as easy as the block-building. With so much fine material at hand, ready-made, it is surprising that he has constructed so poor a work. The popular drama, as presented at the theatres, and originally prepared for the French stage, we think, by Victor Hugo, or his son, furnishes a frame for music incomparably stronger than the present bald version. It is Mr. J. R. Fry's "Notre Dame," not Hugo's, and if presented in Paris, where the composer originally endeavored to bring it out, might have entailed upon the music an irredeemable fiasco. Passing the well-managed and striking first act, character and story are alike deficient—the ordinary stage stock dressed from Hugo's wardrobe. There is hardly a moral reason why *Quasimodo* should wear a hump or ring a bell—and this is the more apparent, since the music also lacks the character which the drama does not supply. Why does not *Gudule* sing from her miserable cloister, according to literary truth, instead of ambulating her grief like a genteel widow? Surely an enterprising composer would not have missed so good an effect, and even a man of talent might have made much of it. The scene where *Esmeralda* flies to the church for sanctuary, and is carried in by the *Hunchback*, is also ignored by our librettist. Effects like these, if not larger, strike deeper than carnival scenes and great processions, and operatists and librettists must rest their claim to theatrical success upon these simpler merits of purpose and action rather than adjuncts of scene. We object to the bad taste of calling *Captain Pharus* (as he is characteristically known the world over) *Captain de Chateaupers*; but all may be summed up in our general objection to the whole perversion of "Notre Dame," which shows as little art as possible. The story of the opera is not as good as even that of "Il Trovatore;" obviously it should be better. We do not expect the librettist to have the dignity of the dramatist—all that we ask from him is the common sense and tact of a play-wright. Mr. Fry's "Notre Dame," badly constructed as the play is, has still action enough, we hope, to hang success upon. The first scene, and doubtless the first act, are ably managed, and what with the magnitude of the chorus and scenery in its presentation at our noble Academy, its splendid effect is unquestionable. The composer's general sustenance of action is, as we have already said, greatly to his credit, and induces us to think that with a better libretto he might have made a better work of music. With all its defects, "Notre Dame" has sufficient attraction, from the great prestige of Hugo's immortal work, the prodigious magnificence of its production, and the merits of its composer, to draw all to its hearing who are disposed to appreciate a liberal stage, and to favor the cause of our own patriotism and art.

### Beethoven's "Fidelio."

Beethoven's Opera, "Fidelio," was produced in November, 1805, at the Imperial House at Vienna, under the title of *Leonora*. In 1814, it was revised throughout, and put upon the stage, under its present title; since which time, no work has been a greater favorite upon the German stage. The plot is simple: Florestan, a Spanish nobleman, and intimate friend of the Prime Minister, has, in some manner fallen into the power of his arch enemy, Pizarro, Governor of one of the castles of the kingdom, used as a prison, who has thrust him into one of the lowest dungeons, and is reducing his portion of bread and water daily, to destroy him with all the horrors of slow starvation. Leonora, the wife of Florestan, seeking her husband in all directions, at length has her suspicions aroused that he is in this prison, assumes male attire, and enters the service of Rocco, the head jailor.

In the opening scene, we have some by-play between Jacquinio, another servant, and Marcellina, daughter of Rocco, in which the girl breaks off her engagement of marriage with Jacquinio, in favor of the elegant and cultivated Fidelio. The latter comes in from the city with chains purchased for Rocco, and with letters for Pizarro. Marcellina announces her desire to marry Fidelio; old Rocco consents and blesses the union. Pizarro enters; Rocco requests him to appoint the future son-in-law his assistant, which is granted. Among the letters is one sent by a friend to the Governor, informing him that the Minister is secretly on his way to examine the prison and that he must prepare to meet him that day. Pizarro sees that his only means of escape lie in the death of the prisoner, and tempts Rocco to murder him. He

refuses utterly. He then orders him to clear out an old cistern in the dungeon for a grave, and will commit the deed himself. After he retires, Fidelio persuades Rocco to allow the prisoners to come out of their dungeons into the court of the castle to inhale the fresh air, and enjoy the sunshine. They appear and she scrutinizes their faces, in hopes of finding Florestan, in vain. Pizarro, appearing again, is enraged to find the prisoners out of their cells, and Rocco excuses it as a custom upon the King's birthday, and reminds him that one is dying in the deep vaults beneath the castle.

In Act Second, we follow Rocco and his new assistant into the vaults, whither they come to dig the grave. Florestan, chained to his hard couch, is seen lying in the dim obscurity of the dungeon. The grave is dug; Fidelio, trying in vain to catch a sight of the prisoner's features. She persuades Rocco to give the dying man the piece of bread and the pitcher of water they have brought with them for their refreshment. When all is ready, Pizarro is called. In the first act, the Governor has ordered a watch in the tower of the castle, to give a signal upon a trumpet, the moment the Minister appears. Now the monster approaches the prisoner, ordering Fidelio to retire. She has at length seen the features of her husband, and in an agony of suspense, hides herself behind a neighboring pillar. Ordering Florestan to be loosed from his confinement, he addresses him in an aria expressive of hate, satiated vengeance, and infernal triumph—an aria, in the mouth of a competent singer, and before an audience whose knowledge of the German language enables them to feel its truthfulness, which is a masterpiece of unbridled rage and passion. He raises his dagger, and Fidelio rushes between them. "Slay first his wife!" she cries. Throwing her violently aside he raises the weapon, but she again springs before him and points a pistol to his breast. At this instant the trumpet comes faintly sounding down from the ramparts, and Florestan is saved. Pizarro baffled retires, and leaves the husband and wife to the joy, too great for words, which can only find vent in the sweetest sounds of music.

Here was a subject after Beethoven's own heart. No dramatic story could better embody the sentiment that burns in all his music. The struggle of the soul with destiny, of light with darkness; Joy ("Choral Symphony"), Freedom, Truth, Humanity, bright ideals, natural rights and objects of the soul, postponed by human wrong and error; darkness, confinement and long suffering for the present, but glorious delivery at last by heavenly, all-conquering, human Love. The deliverance of the prisoner, made so because he "dared to utter Truth," through the high faith and persevering heroism of a devoted wife. The moral sublimity of this inspired him to his task. The fortune of his effort was alike characteristic. The first production was a failure. Vienna then, (in 1805), was occupied by the French army; the theatres were deserted; an audience of unmusical French soldiers, with but a sprinkling of friends of the true sort, found it tedious. He had written more for Art, than for the convenience of singers, and these important personages murmured at the difficulty of the music; he had enemies besides; the German libretto, adapted by Sonnleithner from an earlier one in French, was not altogether well managed; it was badly divided in three acts; the composer had not studied popular effect sufficiently, and was persuaded into endless bother of altering and re-altering. Peace restored in 1814, it was again brought out in Vienna, wisely compressed into two acts, and with many parts omitted or re-written; and in this form we have it now.

Beethoven wrote for his opera four overtures. The first did not satisfy. The third, known in our concerts as the "Leonora" overture, in C, is a different treatment of ideas found in No. 2. This is by far the finest of the four, as well as by far the fittest introduction to the opera, since it is a resumé of its leading themes and incidents, and conceived in the lofty tone and spirit of the whole. Beethoven much preferred the overture in C; but many thought it too long and too great a work for the commencement, and hence he substituted the lighter and brighter overture in E, now commonly played before *Fidelio*. This borrows nothing from the opera itself; has on the contrary a lively and *Don Juan*-like expression, and only connects itself as a natural prelude to the lighter and half-comic situations with which the play commences. There is only this advantage about it, that it conforms to the remarkable *crescendo* of the entire music, beginning with the lightest and least exciting, and grows more and more intensely tragic and grand until the climax where the prisoner is saved. The composition consists of sixteen numbers.

No. 1 is a gay and charming, half-comically serious duet, (in A), between Marcellina and Jacquinio, who presses her to name the happy day; but she,

poor simpleton, is all in love with the supposed youth Fidelio. The music is Mozartish, clear and sparkling. Knocks at the door keep interrupting the luckless lover just as he thinks he is getting on so famously in his suit.

No. 2, in C minor, commencing Andante, is a sentimental Aria by Marcellina, in which she sighs and dreams of union with Fidelio, and then as the richly sombre instrumentation, "growing to a point," dashes down a scale of triplets and quickens to a livelier movement, she gives utterance to the inspirations of hope. Mozartish still, beautifully and truly so, except in the Beethoven climax and change just mentioned.

No. 3 is unmistakably Beethoven; a few bars of his mystical and deeply shaded introduction leading into the Quartet in G, (Andante): *Mir ist's so wunderbar*, between Marcellina, Leonora, Jacquinio and Rocco. This Canon is so exquisite, the characters so set apart in their answering and imitative phrases, (Marcellina longing and hoping for Fidelio; Leonora painfully conscious of it, yet countenancing the illusion, intent on her great purpose and its dangers; Rocco, too, noticing it and liking the idea well; Jacquinio, his "hair on end" at sight of his poor prospects), that it is always greatly relished and encored.

No. 4. Rocco's song in praise of money;—the least important number in a musical point of view, though it might pay the best.

The music waxes in warmth and inspiration, and in richness of ideas, in No. 5, a Trio, full of life and movement, in which Rocco applauds Fidelio's courageous determination to enter the prison service, tells him (her) he will succeed by perseverance, that the heart gets hardened by familiarity with horrors; she trusts in God and her heart's pure purpose; Marcellina hints that love, too, is a motive worth consideration.

Nos. 6 and 7. A quick march heralds the entrance of Pizarro, who sings an Aria, (D minor), with chorus, a terrific outburst of vengeful rage and hatred, in which he gloats with fiendish delight upon the thought that he shall soon have the heart's blood of Florestan, his fallen enemy and prisoner. The orchestra is lashed into a tempest, and we have the Beethoven energy under its most fearful aspect. The effect is marvellously enhanced, where, as the song thunders along in D major, a low whispered chorus of the guards in B flat comes in: "He talks of death, &c."

No. 8. Duet of basses, in which Pizarro proposes to Rocco to make way with the prisoner, but, he refusing, declares his intention to do the dark deed himself; so his revenge will taste the sweeter; but Rocco must prepare a grave by the old cistern in the cell. The contrasted feelings of the two men are powerfully and wonderfully depicted in the music, which, with Beethoven's dark and mysterious modulations, is singularly suggestive and exciting.

No. 9 is the great recitative and Aria of Leonora, who has overheard the plot: *Aschenbrüder! wo eilst du hin?* (Monster! to what art thou hastening?) It is a piece constructed like the scene in the *Frey-schütz*: first a recitative, in which the orchestra, (Allegro agitato), depicts her horror and alarm at the thought of his cruel "tiger sense," but yielding to the rainbow of hope which rises in her mind at the thought that she may save her husband; then a heavenly Adagio, (in E), with prelude and accompaniment of mellow horn and hawson tones; "Come Hope, let not the last star of the weary pale; however distant the goal, Love will reach it," &c.; then an Allegro of immense fire and energy: "I follow the inward impulse!" with rapid running accompaniments of horns and reeds in full chords, exceedingly effective and inspiring. For orchestra and singer it is the most difficult, as well as perhaps the grandest scene of the kind in any opera.

No. 10. Finale of the first act, Chorus of the prisoners, who are let out to greet the light. A wonderfully beautiful piece of music, pervaded by an orchestral figure which indicates the light and buoyant sense of "breathing the free air;" the strain alternates with dark allusions to the prison cells; it is full of answering phrases of the voices; and one, a tenor, sings a strain of gratitude and trust in God; then all unite again in a thrilling climax upon the word *Freiheit*, (freedom)! Then come whispered cautions: we are watched; then voice after voice again, as at first, fall into the original strain: "O what delight, in the free air, &c." As the prisoners withdraw, there is a dialogue between Fidelio and Rocco. Her desire to go down into the cells with him is granted. This in spoken dialogue, followed by recitative; then in an *Allegro molto* movement he informs her of their first task, to dig that grave, alludes to the poor half-starved prisoner, &c. She hopes to see her husband, and so does not shrink. Then the duet assumes a flowing Andante movement in six-eight rhythm, in which the ear is charmed, but your soul shudders:



"We must straight to work." "I follow, were it to my death," &c. Then Marcellina and Jacquino rush in and give the alarm: Pizarro comes in a great rage that the prisoners are out. The jailor's excuses are quite touching: "The coming in of Spring—the cheerful warm sunlight—and then (a touch of patriotism) it is the king's *Nunens-fest*." The poor prisoners are ordered back; and their exquisitely pathetic chorus: "Farewell, thou warm sunlight," with expressive orchestral accompaniment, and with the quintet of principal characters, (each characteristic: Marcellina and Jacquino commiserating, Fidelio full of his purpose, Pizarro urging on the jailor, the latter lamenting his cruel duty), brings the act to a grand musical and dramatic conclusion. Nothing could be finer than this Finale, which is thoroughly original and Beethovenesque.

We proceed briefly to describe the contents of the second Act.

No. 11. It opens with a remarkable instrumental introduction of some thirty measures, very slow, (*Grave*), in F minor, and sublime in its suggestion of a high soul languishing in chains, in dreary solitude and darkness. The loud, long bursts of the wind instruments in full chords answering to the low monotone of the strings; the plaintive exclamations of the cello, echoed by violins and oboes; the symphonic accompaniment of the drums (in minor fifths) to the wild diminished seventh chords, &c., lend a singular impressiveness to this prelude to the gloom of Florestan's cell, and to the prisoner's touching recitative: "God, what darkness! O heavy trial!" and with a change of key, (to E major): "I murmur not. God's will is just." A beautiful modulation to A flat introduces the exquisite tenor melody, (*Adagio cantabile*), which forms a leading feature in the "Leonora" overture, (No. 3). In this song all the tenderness and sweetness of Beethoven's heart flow out. The words are:

In the Spring-time of my life  
I dared to boldly speak the truth,  
And chains are my reward.  
Willingly I suffer every pain,  
And an ignominious end.  
With the sweet consolation in my heart,  
That I have done my duty.

The music quickens to an Allegro, (in F), as in a sort of "tranquil inspiration bordering on delirium," the prisoner thinks he feels a softer air about him, and sees as it were an angel of deliverance, in the form of Leonora! Such a scene demands the very best of tenors.

No. 12 opens with a piece of "Melodrama." Short, expressive bits of instrumentation preluding to the brief sentences of spoken dialogue between Rocco and his new assistant, Fidelio, (Leonora), who have come down into the cell to dig the grave. Leonora: "How cold it is here in this subterranean vault!" Rocco, (pointing to the prisoner): "There he is!" L. "God stand by me, if it is he!" &c. Then follows the marvellous duet, in A minor, *Andante con moto*, in which they proceed to dig, she watching the prisoner, as Rocco's back is bent, during the prelude. The orchestral part, in dull, ponderous triplets, is descriptive of their work, and the contrast of their voices, (the old jailor exhorting to fresh efforts, Fidelio brave, but almost fainting), is wonderfully expressive. At length, with a struggling upward rousade of the double basses, a great stone is heaved up, and on goes the work again to the same movement, she more and more overcome by fatigue and terror, but still anxiously scrutinizing the poor prisoner. This duet, not difficult for orchestra or singers, is such as only Beethoven's imagination could have invented, and cannot but be heard with thrilling interest. Indeed how the spell of this tragic music deepens and grows upon you with more and more intensity, as the dark drama proceeds! Musically and dramatically, nothing in the whole range of opera is more exciting than this whole Act.

No. 13. A most lovely Terzetto, between Florestan, Leonora and Rocco; a sweet, flowing Allegro, in A major, smooth and melodious enough for Mozart, and yet the tenderness and depth are Beethoven's. The prisoner asks heaven's blessing on the youth who shows such humane interest; Leonora, now persuaded that it is her husband, is agitated by heavenliest hopes, and fears; she has a bit of bread which she would give him; the jailor is touched, but hints that it is forbidden. Wonderful is the modulation just here, as Fidelio coaxingly suggests: It can do no harm, it is soon all over with him! The bread is given, and the Trio kindles to a brighter blaze of feeling. This Trio would be exquisite without the action, sung as a concert piece, if well accompanied; but with true, fervent, natural action, it is as pure a fusion of situation, character and music, as purely lyrical a moment, as any in *Don Juan*.

No. 14. Quartet, *Allegro con brio*, in D. Pizarro steals in, throws off his dark mantle and reveals himself to the prisoner: "Pizarro, whom thou

wouldst have overthrown, Pizarro, the avenger, stands before thee!" The agitated music yields for a moment to a heroic, measured strain of horns and trumpets, as Florestan with composure replies: "A murderer stands before me." He lifts the dagger, when Leonora throws herself before her husband. He flings the rash youth back; she covers him again: *Tödt' erst sein Weib!* (kill first his wife!) she screams upon a high note—the climax of the opera. "His wife!" "My wife!" exclaim Pizarro, Rocco, Florestan; the swift quartet proceeds, until Pizarro seeks to kill them both, when she presents a pistol to his breast, and just then, in a changed key (B flat), resounds faintly from behind the scenes the trumpet announcing the arrival (so dreaded by Pizarro) of the Minister. It is the well-known trumpet passage of the "Leonora" overture. A few wonderfully expressive bars, in which the wild delight of Leonora and Florestan: "Thou art (I am) saved!" the mortification and curses of Pizarro, and the joyful astonishment of the old jailor find utterance, and again the trumpet strain rings nearer and louder. The quartet closes with a breathless Allegro, like clouds flying before the wind, that sweeps the dull skies clear,—the only piece of music that ever reminded us at all of the quick part of the Sextet in *Don Juan*.

No. 15. Duet between Leonora and Florestan, expressing the joy of meeting after such a separation: *O namen—namenlose Freude!* (O joy beyond expression!) It is a rapturous *Allegro vivace* movement of indescribable beauty, and the true Beethoven inspiration. Its animated rhythm, its alternate mingling and separation of voices, (which, now by short ecstatic responses, and now flowing together, seem literally to rush into each other's arms, and then to hold each other off as if to realize the union with distinct assurance), the directness, simplicity and earnestness of the main melody, and then the delicious strangeness of the modulation with each new flash of thought or new shade of emotion; all is full of joy and love, and gratitude and wonder, of sense of trial past and heavenly reward, a whole eternity in one miraculous and glorious moment.

No. 16. Finale. Scene the court yard of the prison. A quick and buoyant march, (in C), accompanies the entrance of the Minister and his train. The stage fills with men and women. Pizarro, as governor of the prison, accompanies the Minister; on the other side the prisoners come forth, with Marcellina and Jacquino. The march becomes accompaniment to a grand burst of full chorus: "Hail to the day, the much longed for, yet unexpected, when Justice and mercy appear before the door of our prison grave!" Fernando, the Minister, (basso), announces the royal mercy and deliverance to the prisoners, (they are supposed to be political prisoners). Again a snatch of chorus: "Hail to the day!" Old Rocco comes in, leading Leonora and Florestan. The Minister, astounded, recognizes his dear, his noble friend, whom he had supposed dead. Rocco relates the plot and the deliverance; Pizarro is denounced. "And Leonora," adds old Rocco, "Leonora?" "Yes, the ornament of womanhood I lead before you!" Pizarro would interpose "two words," but is silenced. The prisoner's chains are taken off; it is the wife's privilege to do it. In all this hurried recitative, the orchestra keeps up a continuous movement, full of life and complex beauty; and finally the key gets back to the broad sunlight of C major, (the key of the Leonora overture which Beethoven intended to commence the work), and the whole concludes with a grand ensemble of chorus, with quintet of principals, in praise of Leonora and of Woman's high devotion, borrowing the first lines from Schiller's "Hymn to Joy":

"Who a gentle wife has won,  
Join he in our jubilee! &c."

### Liszt in Rome.

From "Sights, sermons, and sounds in Rome," dated Passion Week, 1864, and contributed to the *Christian Inquirer*, we clip the following.

Very mysteriously an envelope was left upon my table containing a mysterious Italian ticket. Could the clerk explain it? Yes; a friend of mine had told him that I wished for it, and he had sent it into my room and put two scudi in my bill for it. But would he translate it? Certainly. "A sacred Accademia, in honor of the Cross for an oblation of St. Peter, which His Holiness the Pope designed to accept, the profits destined for the School of the Poor." Were all the tickets two scudi? Ah, no. They pay what they please, and some pay large sums; but two scudi is the least. And what is to be done? Liszt is to play the piano; so it is expected, though the public do not know it. It is then a concert? No, it is an academy. Well, I will go; and so I did at two P. M. The affair came off at

an Imperial place, "Pretorian Camp, near the Baths of Diocletian," and also near the railway terminus in the suburbs. At the gate, soldiers stopped the carriages to know if they had tickets. Rome has no good public concert-hall, so this performance took place in a half finished building. Soldiers on duty everywhere. The hall was damp, for it was on the ground floor, and the low-vaulted brick arches were barely covered with gray plaster, and the guard's designation of a place where over-garments could be left had a decidedly chilly sound. Imagine a hall shaped thus, a Christ in plaster at one end, and a Virgin at the other; the cheerless walls and columns rendered less barren by flags and festoons, wreaths of roses, crosses, clusters of flowers, the latter stuck into patches of clay, which held them firmly against the walls, kept their stems moist, and did not show. At the upper end of the hall were a pulpit and piano. Of course, people rushed for seats in the semi-circle at the left of the rostrum, and the unfortunate tardy filled the chairs in the stem of the "paragaph." I was in time for a good seat, though not far enough round to see the pianist's fingers. There was no large platform, and the grand piano stood with its fore-legs upon one small stand, and its hind legs upon another. When the place was crowded, a brass band at the entrance, the lower end, played operatic airs. Next, the choir of male voices under the plaster east of the Virgin backed with red, a choir belonging to the Chapel Giulia, chanted a motetto, "We adore thee, O Christ!"—Palestrina's music, written three centuries ago, harmonious, but not to my fancy. Around the piano were seated various red and violet robed cardinals. One of them now seated himself at the desk, too lazy to stand up, and read a sermon in Italian from enormous sheets, on "The Church Teaching by the Cross," clear and well divided, though not very intelligible to me.

Then Liszt, the world-renowned, seated himself at the piano. When I took music-lessons in a little street at the west end of Boston, a picture of Liszt hung over the teacher's piano. It was the common picture, Liszt surrounded with distinguished musicians, enrapt in the melody which he plays, his head thrown back, hair flowing, and hands arched. He still re-embles that picture. His long, grav. unparted hair, brushed straight back, swings about his smooth shaven face as he bends to the piano before him, like a heavy silk fringe. His face is sharp and steadfast, lighted up "e'en at the sounds himself has made," but not too full of amiable beauty. And his playing! Add an exquisite touch, refinement of modulation, rapidity of execution, to the playing of the best pianist America ever heard, and you begin to appreciate Liszt. Such diminuendos, such melody! May I criticize? He lifts his hand unnecessarily high in the air. He bows too often in a catch-courtesy way on taking his seat and when he is rising. He has too much the air of a man playing before "the highest nobility," and depending upon their smile. These are but parts of him, and do not affect the great whole. The first piece, "Armonia Religiosa," was only admirable for the rapid succession of its chords. After it, a second church dignitary sat and read in a feeble way a sermon, "The Church Combating by the Cross," in French. Applauded, as were all the sermons, a grand old custom, another of Palestrina's motetti, "O Bone Jesus!" Then Liszt executed two pieces, "Ava Maria," which made you hear the tinkling of vesper bells, and "Cujus animam gementem," from "Stabat Mater." Il Signor Avvocato Paolo Tarnassi recited a tedious Italian poem, "Hail, O Cross! our only hope," in a florid style. After more brass music came the third discourse, in English this time, read by Dr. Manning, the famous apostate described in our last, "Doing Good by the Cross," very long. He dwelt largely upon the religious orders in the Catholic Church, and their self-sacrificing goodness, "reversing, by a sweet refinement of charity, the very words of Jesus, and making the blind leader of the blind." Truly, the Roman Church casts up a beautiful record in this respect, but does it exceed the record of Nightingale, Dix, and our noble army of nurses? This was followed by a hymn of Potoni, "O Crux Ave, Spes Unica." Then the German sermon, "The Church Triumphant by the Cross," and a valedictory thanksgiving, *Ringraziamento*, in Italian, very like a college Latin salutatory. Liszt worthily closed the programme with a religious melody, "Charity"—not the "meek and lowly," played by every Yankee girl, but an air even better.

Four sermons in four languages in one afternoon, is quite enough for any man, to say nothing of Liszt, last but not least.

## Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, MAY 28, 1864.

## Death of Meyerbeer.

The Musical Gazette of Paris comes to us dressed in mourning, and full of one theme, as are most of the musical journals of Europe; for the author of the *Huguenots* is no more! He died in Paris on Monday, the 2nd inst. For several years he had not visited that city of his triumphs, but had lived for the most part in Berlin, his native city, in the palatial building in the corner by the Brandenburg gate, where the stately avenue Unter den Linden ends in an aristocratic square. There we can imagine him in the quiet exercise of his duties as kapellmeister to the King of Prussia, a position mainly honorary, arranging now and then a court concert in the *Schloss*, composing music for royal and public occasions, lending the light of his countenance to operas and concerts in the Royal Theatre, the Singakademie, &c., far more fond of appearing in such places than Rossini seems to be in Paris, and at the same time far more fond of labor, and ambitious to renew his laurels, still planning, elaborating, ever revising, correcting, finishing new works to prolong the shining series of *Robert*, the *Huguenots*, the *Prophète*, *L'Étoile du Nord* and the *Pardon de Ploermel*. The London *Musical World* says:

The great musician was taken away in the midst of plans fast ripening into maturity. His *Africaine* was not his only care. He had another opera completed. This was *Judith*—on a biblical subject, as the name implies. His mind, too, was intent upon a sacred cantata for the Birmingham Festival; and with this in view, the Bible was of late his more than ever inseparable companion. He entertained also the project of a secular oratorio. A sacred oratorio he never at any time contemplated. "What" —he would ask—"can I be expected to do after Mendelssohn's *Elijah*?" He may have under-estimated his powers in this direction; for his partiality to the sacred style of composition (witness many published works) was notorious; but his resolution was not the less fixed and unalterable. Another cherished scheme was a grand historical opera, on some English subject. In 1855—when superintending the production of his *Étoile du Nord* at Covent Garden (for the revival of which opera, this season, at the same theatre, he had half made up his mind to pay London another visit)—he happened to attend the Princess's Theatre. There he witnessed the gorgeous representations of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.*, which has immortalized the management of Mr. Charles Kean. Enchanted with what he saw on that occasion, and particularly struck with one or two of the old English melodies which Mr. J. L. Hutton had introduced in the music, his active mind there and then conceived the idea of an English Historical opera on the plan and dimensions of the *Huguenots*. The book was to be prepared by one of our most eminent men of letters, with whom Meyerbeer had several consultations on the subject.

But these, and many more schemes, which kept that busy head incessantly employed, were never destined to be realized. The mainspring of intelligence snapped asunder and the curious clockwork of the brain ceased to perform its functions.

A series of articles on the life and works of Meyerbeer, from the pen of M. Fétis, was already in course of publication in the *Revue et Gazette Musicale*, when his death intervened. From these we learn that his long expected *L'Africaine* occupied his mind as long ago as *Le Prophète*. His last visit to Paris was purely for the purpose of at last bringing out the *Africaine*, the score of which was completed in 1860, but its production kept back for want of a soprano singer answering to his ideal of the leading part. He arrived in Paris early in September, and, in spite of his fa-

tigue, went that very evening to the opera to hear Mlle. Tietjens in the *Huguenots*. "From that moment not a day passed in which the *Africaine* was not in question. But the pains he took in the choice of artists, in the distribution of the rôles, in the details of the *mise en scène*, did not suffice for the activity of this indefatigable organization, and he incessantly complained of having nothing to compose. He was eager to find a libretto for a comic opera, and he declared that it would be a recreation for him to write the music of one. For him repose only existed in variety of labor!

"According to his habit, he had wished to have the score copied at his own lodgings, and the copyists were installed in his apartment in the rue Montaigne. Time was pressing. all the grand rôles were copied, as well as most of the smaller rôles of the first act. . . . When the *Huguenots* was last taken up again at the Opera, Meyerbeer attended several rehearsals and directed the studies of Mlle. Marie Sax, whom he had finally chosen and designated for the principal female part in *L'Africaine*.

"Nothing showed the slightest alteration in the health of the great artist. On Friday, April 22, he had dined at home alone, and his repast was frugal. Feeling indisposed the next day, he sent for his physician, who remarked no alarming symptom; nothing but great weakness, which, added to his age, might render an energetic medical treatment dangerous. He continued none the less to occupy himself with "*L'Africaine*." He talked of it to his visitors, and to one of them he said: 'At first I had written only an introduction, but they advised me to substitute an overture. It is done, entirely done; I have it there, and it only remains for me to finish the orchestration: how unlucky that this indisposition prevents me!'

"The weakness sensibly increased, and yet he was uneasy at the non-arrival of one of the copyists. When Dr. Rayer complimented him on his works, he said: 'You are too indulgent; but I have here (putting his fingers to his forehead) many ideas and many things which I should like to do.'—You will do them, and many more besides, said the doctor: 'Do you believe so? Ah well, so much the better!'

"On Sunday (May 1), towards noon, the intestinal obstruction appeared to yield, but at the expense of his general strength. Since the morning two of his daughters had arrived from Baden, in time to be present in his last moments, as well as M. Jules Beer, his nephew, and M. Brandus (music publisher). As he did not wish to alarm his family, Mme. Meyerbeer, more lately warned, did not arrive till Monday, accompanied by her oldest daughter and her son-in-law, baron von Korf. On Sunday evening about 8 o'clock, when all hope was lost, he turned as usual to the persons around his bed and bade them, with a smile, good night, then turned away, and they pretended to withdraw. On Monday, at 5 1-2 in the morning, the pulse and respiration had become almost insensible, and at 20 minutes before 6, a sigh, which was the last, announced that life was extinct!

"A few hours afterward, Rossini, arriving from Passy, where he had heard of the master's illness, presented himself in the rue Montaigne to inquire the news of him. When the concierge in a brusque way informed him of the sad event, he was obliged to sit down and shed copious tears.

He embraced Mme. Meyerbeer, who had come down to receive him."

We are further informed by the same journal that the deceased left written instructions about his burial, enjoining particular precautions against being buried alive; and that there were found, among his papers, "several prayers, in a style eminently religious and touching, composed by him and for his own private use." No other express declaration of his will was found. It is only known how persistently eager he was to hasten the production of *L'Africaine*, a work which he seems to have cherished with a lively affection.

It is said too, that in seeking a libretto for a comic opera, he employed his leisure in arranging a text which should connect the different parts of the music to *Struensee*.

We have not room for the details of the funeral ovation in Paris; the procession, which accompanied his remains to the railway station for Berlin, was as when one of the powers of the earth are buried. It was escorted by national guard with bands and drum corps of the *gendarmerie*, followed by most distinguished musical and public personages, representatives of the Conservatoire, the theatres, the musical societies, &c.; the walls of the railway station were draped in mourning; an organ and a magnificent cenotaph erected; the bands played the "Schiller march," the march from the *Prophète* and that from the *Pardon de Ploermel*; the singers and orchestra of the Opera performed the grand church chorus and march in the *Prophète*; those of the Opera Comique a chorus from *Le Pardon*; discourses were pronounced by MM. Beulé, Saint-Georges, Baron Taylor, Emile Perrin, Camille Doucet, Ullmann, (grand Rabbi of France) and others; and thus twice in the space of two years has Paris paid these solemn honors to a musical composer. Halévy was the earlier instance.

A brief sketch of Meyerbeer's career will be found on another page. This is not the time to attempt an estimate of his genius and productions. Our impressions of the peculiar power and the short-comings of his music are scattered throughout the volumes of this journal, with critical analyses of his operas, accounts of their performance and of their effects, and also the opinions of such critics as Scudo, Richard Wagner, Henri Heine, &c., those of the two last not unmingled with severity. While owning the great impressiveness and ingenuity of his operas, the carefully studied effects, the minute elaboration, the individualization of character, the wealth and wierd charm of instrumentation, we have never been able to sympathize with his unbounded admirers, or to feel that he was *great* save in an external and material sense. We are of those who feel in him the power of will and talent rather than of genius. The gift of spontaneous melody was not peculiarly his; elaborately planned effects instead of inspiration. If we feel the latter anywhere, it is in some parts of *Robert*, particularly in the melody of the part of Alice, which is unique and fresh, and has the charm of nature. But even *Robert* is as a whole heavy, and much of it forced and strange. And this we have felt still more in the *Huguenots*, the *Prophète*, &c. After sitting through one of these great operas, we have not felt inspired, inwardly edified and strengthened; have not gone away with lighter hearts and nobler hopes and aspirations, but have felt wearied and oppressed. How different the feeling after



such works as *Fidelio*, or the Ninth Symphony, or *Elijah*!

In short, the works of Meyerbeer have had their place assigned them by many of the most earnest musicians and music-lovers, and as we think justly, in the category of "music of effect." Outward *eclat* enters too largely into their motive. Wonderful elaborations they are, not creations. Beautiful in many a detail, not living wholes quickened with one breath of genius. Just so we feel before one of Kaulbach's vast and crowded frescoes, or on laying down a romance of Sue or Bulwer; not the Raphael or Shakespeare feeling. We may be wrong; but it is significant that this criticism has come mostly from those most deeply, fondly and sincerely versed in the music and the genius of the Mozarts, Beethovens, Mendelssohns, Schuberts, Rossinis and their peers. The strongest expressions of it are on record from the mouths of men like Mendelssohn and Schumann. What are all the *bravos* of fashionable Italian opera publics, all the pompous Parisian homage, all the wide *reclame* of which Meyerbeer in person was so indefatigable an organizer, compared to opinions like these? There are kinds as well as degrees of greatness. Meyerbeer is great, perhaps the greatest, among his proper peers, such notables as Berlioz, Halévy, Wagner, Gounod, Verdi: but it remains to see whether the enthusiasm is not hasty and superficial which would place his statue in the august company of Gluck and Mozart, Beethoven and Mendelssohn and Weber.

### The German Opera.

The second week and second half of the short visit, or specimen season, of Mr. Grover's admirable company was still attended with increase of recognition and enthusiasm. All but two of the performances were repetitions, contrary to the original programme, but they were clearly called for. *Faust* was twice repeated; it began and closed the week; we should have accounted three nights more profitably spent upon *Fidelio* or *La Dame Blanche*; but everybody wished to see, and see repeatedly, the incomparable Margaret of FREDERICI and the Mephistopheles of HERRMANN. Martha had been so surprisingly well done, Frederici was such a charming Nancy, both the ladies sang and played with such a genial vivacity and grace together, HIMMER's manly tenor voice and action were so truly refreshing, and the whole thing was so quickened in the rendering even when the music staled, that those who had long since heard enough of Martha enjoyed it that night in the beaming faces of fresh listeners. Then Weber's *Freyschütz*, the most perfect of their productions, so wonderful in its intrinsic charm of music and romance, and with the very ideal of an Agathe in Frederici, only increased desire "with what it fed upon." The only want was of a more telling bass voice and of more vitality in the important part of Caspar, and perhaps too, a sweeter quality of voice in the clever Aennchen of CANISSA. One word of reproof for a portion of the audience. The untimely moment seized upon for the throwing of bouquets and insisting on an encore, right in the middle of the holiest passage, the prayer "*Leise, leise*," instead of waiting for the return of the melody already provided in the construction of the *scena*, and to the end of the triumphant finale thereof, the true place for applause to break out, showed at least a very unmusical sort of impatience and betrayed strange ignorance of so classical and popular work.

The pieces given for the first time (this season and by this troupe) were *Don Juan* and *Fidelio*. In the former we might have expected to find a strong

and earnest German company especially at home, and that it would be their success *par excellence*. Strange to say, it proved the contrary. It was the least creditable of their performances. There were some good parts, to be sure. The Leporello (HERRMANN) was uncommonly good, nay admirable; the Elvira (FREDERICI) far more refined than most of the Elviras; the Don Otavio (HABELMANN) ditto, only an unlucky cold nearly thwarted his best intentions in *Il mio tesoro*; and Mme. JOHANNSEN, though her voice sounds harsh and hard in emphatic high notes, showed fine conception and dramatic energy in Donna Anna. But there was wanting a Don Juan; STEINECKE has not the voice; the Zerlina of CANISSA, with all its pretty rusticity and brightness, was only tolerable after such ideals of the part as we have known here; the Commendatore was weak, and the Masetto weaker; and the general manner in which Mozart's masterpiece was put upon the stage, the slovenly rags and loopholes in the story, lack of consistency and life, showed want of care and earnestness. One could take refuge to be sure in the orchestra, which CARL ANSCHUTZ always keeps so well in hand, and which is uncommonly good in its composition; it is a luxury to single out and listen to its first oboe and bassoon, and Mozart is partial to their service.

But the event of the week, and of this musical year in Boston, was the production of *Fidelio*, Beethoven's one opera, than which there is no greater. We will not attempt to point out here in what its greatness consists. Once, in a slight and sketchy way, we did that, at the time when (seven years ago) the opera was murdered at the Boston Theatre, and never since attempted; that analysis we reprint on another page to-day, merely for convenience of reference, and to save making more words. We have now to do only with the new performance as an event. Nothing in our musical world, for a long time, has given us so pure a satisfaction, or has so encouraged our best hope and effort for the promotion of a sound musical taste and feeling in this community, as the effect of that production of *Fidelio* on Thursday evening, May 12.

The recollection of that abortive presentation seven years ago kept some away; the fear of a thing too good for common opera-goers' food kept more; but it did not prevent a very large audience, in weight of character and culture not inferior to any ever seen within those walls. The whole audience were profoundly impressed. Such excitement, such intensity of interest, keeping pace with the *crescendo* of the musical inspiration, has not manifested itself on any other night. All felt how rich, how beautiful, how noble, how irresistible in the superb logic of its most natural unfolding, how full of the god-like element in man, how inspired out of the very depths of a great soul, all thrilling with imaginative sense and faculty, the whole music is. It suited, too, the earnest temper of the times. All went home full of it, bringing away a strange joy that will last and live on in the mind, and help to tone our lives to finer issues. The excitement was a wholesome one, not dissipating and exhausting, but edifying, tranquillizing, strengthening. We know we speak the feeling of very many who were present; we heard it from their lips and read it in their faces.

Of course such a result implies no mean degree of merit in the performance. And indeed we were agreeably surprised that this company, most of the time exercised in lighter works, could do it on the whole so well. Not that there were not crudities and imperfections, plenty of them. But a general artistic earnestness and fervor pervaded the effort; they entered into the spirit of it. Leonora (Fidelio) is Mme. JOHANNSEN's great part; her acting, especially in the prison scene, and at the great climax, was thrillingly true and powerful; she threw her whole soul into it, and making all allowance for her voice, there are not many who could render the great scena "*Abscheulicher!*" &c., more satisfactorily. HIMMER was equally good as Florestan and has the voice for it. HERRMANN made a capital Rocco; and with CANISSA as Marcellina, HABELMANN in the small but not unimportant part of Jaquino, STEINECKE as the vengeful Pizarro (a most different part, need-

ing a better voice), and GRAFF as the Minister, it certainly was not badly cast. The enthusiasm could not keep in after the clean-cut Canon of the first quartet, which had to be repeated. It was the intrinsic charm of the composition; for the performance was not as precise as its peculiar structure requires; there were hitches in *tempo*, blurring the outline; the orchestra, efficient on the whole, betrayed want of sufficient rehearsal; how could it be otherwise with a thing so improvised for a single night! The Trio that followed was cheered still more warmly. The chorus of prisoners let out to feel the air and sunshine gave exquisite delight; and so, through all the thrilling gloom and raptures of the prison scene. Even those who did not notice, felt the grandeur of the orchestral part there; Beethoven takes hold with a great hand, and yet a delicate, and far down, though you be not thinking of him, but only of the drama going on before your eyes. A certain anti-climax would have been avoided, by not cutting off the jubilant ensemble of the denouement as a separate third act. Beethoven makes only two acts. Do you remember the little march with which the Governor and guard enter? How slight and unpretending, yet how good! This is making just enough of a small incident, not magnifying accident into a scene, as Gounod does in *Faust*, suspending the business of that intensely moving drama half an hour, in order to make much of an insignificant and noisy march with brass band and manoeuvres on the stage, a mere trap for the applause of the vulgar, intended for an encore. The one is art, the other clap-trap. The latter well illustrates Richard Wagner's definition of "effect" music, viz., "result without a motive," i.e., without a motive from within the play itself, without an artistic motive.

When Mr. Grover brings his German opera here again (and we are told we may expect it in September) he will not feel timid about venturing *Fidelio*. He will produce it early and leave room for several repetitions. We have more yet to say in acquittance of our debt to him and conductor Anschütz and their artists, and in the general way of summing up, with inference and suggestion for the future. Here are at least "ten talents," and they ought to be improved, increased.

NOTES ON A MONTH'S CONCERTS.—The most important was "Elijah," the rendering of which great work was creditable to the H. and H. Society, though we have heard some of its choruses sung more clearly by them. The great Organ (Mr. LANG), besides the Orchestra, deepened and broadened the great sea of harmony sublimely. The contralto solos were signally effective in the rich, large, cultivated voice and style of ADELAIDE PHILLIPS. Miss HOUSTON sang her best in some of the soprano pieces, always earnest, full of the feeling of the music, although sometimes nervous; and the other soprano, Mrs. SMITH, pleased by her purity of voice and honest style. Mr. WHEELER's tenor, though it carries no great weight, seconded his true intentions unusually well. Faulty pronunciation marred Mr. RUDOLPHSEN's rendering of the Prophet's part, which otherwise was not without considerable merit. The Angel Trio, by the three ladies above named, has rarely sounded so well; we only wished for more of a *pianissimo* in the chorus that completes it. ZERRAHN, faithful and earnest always, was the conductor.

Next in importance we recall the last three of the 18 Afternoon Concerts of the ORCHESTRAL UNION, which have given us a long list of the best Symphonies and Overtures this winter. Especially rich the last but two (May 4), when they not only repeated Schumann's noble Symphony in B flat (and played it better than before, although few works suffer more from the want of many violins, &c.), but gave the overture to *Oberon*, and Anber's to *Le Serment*; while Mr. PAINE played on the Organ a beautiful *Pastorale* of Bach, a chorus of Handel, and his own fine *Fantasia* and *Fugue* in E minor. Organ treats abound; the rarest (in both senses) is to hear Paine.

Beethoven's 7th Symphony was reserved for the crowning glory of the last concert (May 18), when were also played the pretty *Zanetta* overture and the Finale of the 2d act of *Robert le Diable* (the news of Meyerbeer's death had just come); Mrs. FROHOCK played an *Offertoire* of Wely and a *Pedal Toccata* by Schellenberg, very effectively, upon the Organ. A benefit concert of CARL ZERRAHN was the attraction of last Wednesday, when 150 young ladies, his pupils of the Girl's High and Normal schools, assisted him by singing "Night," a song in three parts; the chorus in *Giuramento*, and the Angel Trio from *Elijah* as a part-song. The two most popular of orchestra pieces, and none better, 5th Symphony and *Freyschütz* overture, opened and closed the concert, and the "Procession of Bridesmaids" from *Lohengrin* returned in a manner the compliment of the 150 maidens.

JOHANN GOTTLIEB SCHNEIDER, court organist at Dresden, and perhaps the most distinguished of all contemporary organists, died there on the 13th of April, in his seventy-fifth year. He excelled in improvisation, but his compositions are not remarkable. It is but a few months since we read of the death of HESSE, of Breslau, an organist almost equal-renowned.

Another distinguished organist—Mynheer TOURS, of Rotterdam, has also died lately. He was one of the first musicians of Holland, and for thirty years the director of the "Eruditio Musical Society."

We see mention of two young Bostonians in the German musical journals. In Berlin Mr. ADAMS has made a successful debut at the Royal Opera as Manrico in *Il Trovatore*, with the famous Mlle. Lucca in the part of the heroine. At the annual examination of the pupils at the Leipzig Conservatorium, the piano playing of Mr. Carlyle PETERSILEA is again highly commended both in the *Signale* and the *Neue Zeitschrift*. The latter says: "He showed in the Adagio and Finale of Chopin's Concerto, that, besides eminent and brilliant *technik*, he is also master of the most various *nuances* of touch (especially admirable was the almost breath-like delicacy of some passages), and that he has quite a good, if also a somewhat material conception, of the intentions of one of the most difficult of composers in this regard."

ADELINA PATTI left Paris on the 2nd for London, where she was to make her re-appearance at Covent Garden as Rosina in *Il Barbiere*. She was fêted on all hands before her departure, and Mme. de Rothschild gave a great dinner in honor of her. Besides opera, she had sung in two charity concerts in Paris, and had distributed 1,000 francs among the chorus singers at the theatre Italian. On coming of age recently, Patti settled an annuity of 6,000 francs on each of her parents. She too has been assuming the rôle of Margaret in *Faust*. A black-eyed Italian Gretchen!

The Musical Festival of the Lower Rhine at Whitsuntide, was to take place this year at Aix-la-Chapelle, under the direction of kapellmeister Rietz, of Dresden. The works to be performed on the first day were: Handel's "Belshazzar," and Lachner's second *Suite* for orchestra; second day: *Magnificat*, by J. S. Bach; scenes from Gluck's *Iphigenia in Tauris*; 114th Psalm by Mendelssohn; and Beethoven's 9th *Symphony*. Joachim, the great violinist, was expected to take part.

PARIS. From the correspondence of the *Orchestra* we learn the following:

At the Italiens the chief point of interest has been the revival of the "*Italiana in Algeri*," for the special purpose of giving Mme. de Méric-Lablache the opportunity of a *premier rôle* in the part of *Isabella*. This lady has hitherto sung in minor parts only, but it was considered due to her talent to give her a *début* in a rôle of importance—even although that selected had been notably filled by such a great artist as Alboni. It was not anticipated that Mme. de Méric-Lablache would excel, if indeed she could hope to equal her great predecessor as a vocalist—but Alboni could be surpassed as an actress, and here it was expected that the De Méric-Lablache would gain ground. The result, however, did not justify the expectation. The lady created no effect even in her acting. This was at least surprising, for in serious opera Mme. de Méric-Lablache exhibits rare qualities of gesture, by-play, and facial control. These qualities, however, appeared to have failed her in Comic Opera—hence her non-success. The sisters Marchisio good-naturedly played in the cast with the new *Isabella*, having only to put in an appearance in the celebrated *Septuor* in the second act. Agnesi played *Mustafa*, Scalseo *Taddeo*. Bettini, the tenor, was not in particularly good voice, but played and sang, as he always does, artistically.

On Sunday last "*Polito*" was given for the benefit of the *maestre*, Alary, with the Marchisios, Giraldoni, Fraschini. At the Lyrique M. Ismaël has re-

sumed his famous part in the "*Rigoletto*." The next news of interest from this theatre will be the production of Félicien David's "*La Captive*," in which a *débütante* is announced to appear, Mdlle. Sannier.

Two deaths are given in the necrology of our French musical contemporaries: one, M. Regnier Canaux, publisher of music; the other, Mdlle. Esther Halévy, daughter of the composer, a talented and promising girl, who died at the early age of some twenty years.

"*Mireille*," in spite of its being more a *succès d'estime* than a real one, continues to attract the Parisians to the Théâtre Lyrique. It has been much curtailed, and the last acts contain now but half the music originally composed for them. With this the lengths are avoided, but the absurdity of the libretto, if possible, increased; and "*Mireille*," in spite of the many beauties contained in the first two acts, will never gain the position "*Faust*" occupies now on all stages; on the contrary, if poet and composer do not resolve to completely rewrite the last acts, "*Mireille*" may possibly never go beyond the precincts of the Théâtre Lyrique. The performance of it is also not what might be desired. Mme. Molan-Carvalho, with her mania ever to represent a *Sonnambula*, cannot succeed in interesting the audience in the heroine she so indifferently represents. Added to that, she sings so out of tune, that sometimes it is a perfect infliction to listen to her. Mme. Faure-Lefèvre, on the contrary, is every thing that is charming; her intelligence and acting, the grace with which she sings the interesting and pleasing music allotted to her, win all the audience in her favor, and she certainly carries away the lion's share of the applause. Ismaël, whom critique and claque have tried, and try, to push, is a most indifferent actor. A rough, limited, and totally uncultivated voice, generally out of tune, and bad acting, are the qualities which distinguish him. On the other side, M. Petit is a young artist full of the best promise; with a pleasant, full baritone voice, already well cultivated, and refined acting—attributes which will most likely lead him to a prominent position in his profession.

BERLIN. A great celebration of "*Israel in Egypt*," as an allusionary suggestion of Allemannia in Denmark, has been originated in Berlin for the benefit of the Crown Prince Fund for needy *Hinterbliebene* in Danish dominions. May 1st saw a grand alliance cemented between the Oberst-Kämmerer or High Chamberlain Count von Redern and the principals of the singing associations, for the purpose of doing full justice to Handel and the "left behind" of sacred Prussian memory. Accordingly, the Academy of Song, the Stern and Jahn Singing Association, the Royal Domechor, the organist Haupt, and the Royal Chapel combined with Fräulein de Ahna, Pressler, Frau Harriers-Wippner, Herren Betz, Krause and Woworsky, and Kapellmeister Taubert. Great as was the object, greater was the attendance in the Garrison Church, and the enthusiasm, awakened in behalf of the "left behind," stirred up by the patronage of II. KK. HH. the Crown Prince and Princess, and augmented by the talent of the Royal Opera House, filled the Church and applauded Handel to many encores. Shakespeare has naturally received his due in Berlin, and has been commemorated in a peculiar manner—the festivity having been confined to music, so far as his celebration by the "Society for the study of new languages" is concerned. The concert-room of the Royal Theatre was crowded with Prussia's intellect and Berlin's beauty. The "budding woman-world," according to the German journals, surrounded the bust of the commemorated bard, and a most elegant audience bent before him in devotion to his genius. Then the orchestras celebrated Shakespeare musically; by overture to "*Hamlet*," overture to "*Coriolanus*," overture to "*Romeo and Juliet*," chorus from "*Midsummer Night's Dream*," song from "*Henry VIII.*" and Taubert's "*Tempest*." Dr. Leo "addressed" the audience, and (a circumstance that would fill a Linnæus Banks with amazement and awe) confined himself to a few quiet unobtrusive words on the subject of Shakespeare's greatness, and was so simple and short, that the audience were twice as deeply impressed as if a Phelps had harangued them with dramatic heavings of the chest. The conditions of the two prizes were then declared, which are to be given (of the value of 500 and 200 thalers respectively) in connection with the Shakespeare festivity. The first is for the best essay "On Shakespeare's influence on the English language, treated in four points;" and the second, "History of Shakespearean criticism in Germany." The time allowed for the delivery of the essays is to the 1st July, eighteen hundred and sixty-five! Truly long enough to allow a mass of German research and German knowledge to be expended on the elaboration of a treatise!

## Special Notices.

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